

N EIGHBORHOOD WATCH NEWSLETTER



Opportunities

With the beginning of the new year, we thought that a reminder of the various volunteer opportunities offered by the City of Huntington Beach might get your interested in volunteering. Perhaps something you can add to your 2022 resolutions? This issue is focused on our future and the things we can do to make our neighborhoods safe!



Welcome Chief Parra!

Neighborhood Watch welcomes Eric Parra as its new Chief of Police for 2022. I am looking forward to partnering with the Mayor, City Council, and staff as we work to ensure the safety and well being of Surf City." Chief Parra holds a bachelor's degree from California State University of Long Beach in Criminal Justice, and a Juris Doctor from Western State University College of Law.

Chief Parra has more than 33 years of law enforcement experience. He held a variety of leadership roles with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, leaving that agency in 2019 as Division Chief.

Throughout the course of his career, Chief Parra has been responsible for the oversight and coordination of various law enforcement operations, including supervision of widespread patrol functions, leading reform efforts at the Los Angeles County jail system, instituting community policing programs, and establishing improved internal law enforcement operational practices.

We wish Chief Parra our best, and, Thank you for your service!

About NW

Block

Meetings

There are several ways that HBPD and HB Neighborhood Watch can assist residents who deal with quality-of-life issues. In our pre-covid meetings, holiday crimes, vehicle theft, and homelessness issues had been addressed. But “crimes of opportunity can be avoided by being mindful of your surroundings, locking your doors, removing valuables from your car, and by removing packages from your doorsteps as soon as you can. If you see anything suspicious in your neighborhood don't hesitate to contact the police department. It is also good to get to know your neighbors online or in person. If no one reports a crime, your whole community can be impacted. Simply offer a hello and open the door to a new friendship! Some contact numbers are listed on page 3. You can also visit the City's website at:

www.huntingtonbeachca.gov

Or visit the department in person for more detailed information on your specific concerns. If you would like to start a new Neighborhood Watch Program or arrange a Neighborhood Watch Block meeting for your neighborhood, Please **call 714-536-5245**



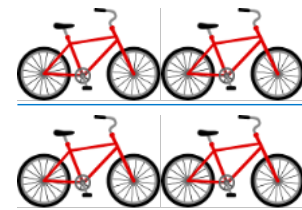
Did you receive a bicycle for Christmas?

Did anyone in your family receive a bicycle for Christmas? If so, do not forget to register your bicycle(s)!

In the year 2021 between January and September, the Huntington Beach Police Department received 379 reports of stolen bicycles, which is an average of about 42 stolen bicycles per month. This totals an estimate of about \$615,818 worth of bicycles (note that one bicycle was valued at \$100,000). Of those 379 bicycles that were reported stolen, 71.8% did not include a serial number in their report. Unfortunately, if a police officer recovers a stolen bicycle and the serial number is not registered, it makes it difficult to find the

rightful owner. For that reason, it is imperative to annotate the serial number of your bicycle and other information that makes it easy to identify when it is reported stolen. The Huntington Beach Police Department has partnered with Project 529 as a way for you to keep your bicycle information all on one website.

To register your bicycle, visit the Project 529 Garage website. <https://project529.com/garage/organizations/huntingtonbeachpolicedepartment/landing>



Are you Advertizing ?

From OC Realtor

I was driving around the other day and found myself looking at the decals on people's cars... You know the cutout ones of the families, their pets, what sports they play, etc.? It got me thinking about what they SAY about you, but also what they TELL criminals about you.

You see, I was sitting at a stoplight for a mere minute gazing at the van in front of me. And in that short time, I learned:

- 1. This woman had lost her husband*
 - 2. She was likely a single mom*
 - 3. That she (or her kids) went to a certain college*
 - 4. How many people were in their home*
 - 5. And that she didn't appear to have any animals either*
- In that same timeframe, another nearby vehicle's decals told me they had great Danes, played rugby and were a military family. Do you see what I'm talking about here?*
- Vehicle #1 - Easy prey for a bad guy.*

Vehicle #2 - Someone I'd think twice about messing with! Although it's a fun idea, even though it's a simple act, any information we put out there has the ability to alert others of how safe (or unsafe) we truly are. (Continues Page 4)



CUT AND PASTE

Police Emergency

911

Information Desk

714 960-8843

Non-Emergency/Dispatch

714 960-8825

Graffiti Hotline

714 960-8861

POLICE Business Line

714 960-8811

Community Relations

714 536-5245

Vacation house Checks

714 374-1507

Neighborhood Watch

714 536-5245

CUT AND PASTE



(Continued from Page 3)

And MANY of these situations could lead someone to think you'd be an easy target for a robbery, home invasion or carjacking. I can't stress enough how important this is! Don't give criminals free information. Bumper stickers, parking passes, decals ... all of these have the potential to work for you or against you....

"To learn more you can visit USCAA" They offer topics just like this one, along with situational awareness and so much more. If this article got you thinking today, you can explore what USCCA has to offer!

P.S. - Best advice?

If you must place these types of stickers or information on your vehicle:

Keep it generic, don't expose any of your vulnerabilities and put away anything with private information when possible.

But the safest option of all is to consider leaving a little to the imagination ... and not share any information!



Beware of Cat Thieves!

BY PETER BOHR Illustration by Neil Webb



How to Protect Your Vehicle's Catalytic Converter!

Turns out, lightning can strike twice. Or, in Cathy Cobb's case, it was thieves. After a day's work after her job in Costa Mesa, Cobb switched on her Honda Element, only to be startled by a noise that could wake the dead. The ruckus was familiar; it was the second time in less than a year that a thief had ripped apart her car's exhaust system to steal its catalytic converter. The first time, the Honda had been in her own driveway. Catalytic converter theft has become epidemic. Such thefts have been happening for the past six or seven years, but they've accelerated since 2020, says Rob McGuire, service manager of Longo Toyota in El Monte. California's insurance industry that statewide converter replacements increased by about 90 percent from 2019 to 2020, nearly all of them due to thefts.

Since the mid 70s, nearly all gasoline powered cars and trucks have been equipped with one or more catalytic converters, which scrub toxic gases and pollutants from the engine's exhaust. (Continued on Page 5)

Vacation House Checks The RSVP Program

As a Huntington Beach resident, you have the advantage of a Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in your city. One of the many services RSVPs offer HB residents is vacation checks. If you are going on vacation, notify the HBPD RSVP office to sign up for a vacation check. RSVPs will conduct an exterior security check of your home. Exterior areas of your home that are not accessible, will not be checked. If something appears suspicious, the RSVPs shall call for the assistance of a police officer.

Please try to provide us with at least a 1-week notice (due to scheduling). We do understand that in an emergency that may not always be possible.

If you have any questions or need more information about the HBPD RSVP Program, please call the RSVP office:

714-374-1507 House checks are not performed on Saturdays or Sundays.

Vacation House Checks are performed based on availability of volunteers.

Courtesy of the HBPD Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)



Beware of Cat Thieves!

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How does that work? Platinum, palladium, and rhodium metals, more precious than gold inside the convertors, do the trick. Increased world demand has sent prices of these metals soaring tenfold from a decade or so ago. Scrapyards pay a couple of hundred dollars or more for convertors. In turn, they sell them to recyclers to extract the metals. Armed with little more than a wrench or a hacksaw, a thief can slither under a vehicle and unbolt or saw off a convertor in just minutes. Pickups and SUVs like Cobb element (a filter) are popular targets because they sit high off the ground, making it easier for the thief. Toyota Prius converters seem to be the most favored because they're relatively easy to remove and carry hefty amounts of precious metals. Moreover, the metals degrade less because the hybrid's gasoline engine doesn't run continuously. Replacing a converter isn't cheap! A Prius converter might cost between \$1,500 and \$4,000, depending on how much damage the thief inflicts on the exhaust system's pipes and sensors, McGuire says. And the thefts have generated a lot of business for repair shops.

During a two-week stretch in April, Jeri's Muffler and Brake in Riverside replaced about 25 converters from a wide range of vehicles, including a motorhome and vans, manager Don Veilleux says. So, what's a car owner to do to discourage thieves from swiping a converter? Make it harder for them to get at it. MillerCAT of San Jose makes a Toyota-approved converter-protection device called the Cat Shield for the Prius and other vehicles targeted by thieves. MillerCAT sells the shields for \$140 to \$270, plus installation, which takes about an hour. An Internet search turns up a variety of other protective devices, as well. For many vehicles, Jeri's muffler can bend and weld rebar to form a cage around the converter for about \$300. Fortunately, Cobb carries comprehensive insurance on her Honda that covers replacement convertors, although she had to pay out-of-pocket deductibles. And even though she purchased a protective shield for her latest convertor, she's now extra vigilant, making sure she parks her beloved Honda in her garage!

**Your Neighborhood
Watch Volunteers!**

**Executive Board of
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Executive
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Dwyer, Christine Fairchild

Member at Large: Jeanne

Petrocella

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**THE HUNTINGTON BEACH POLICE
DEPARTMENT WOULD LIKE TO REMIND
YOU!**

**IF YOU WALK YOUR DOG IN! A CITY PARK,
IT NEEDS TO BE ON A LEASH!**

The Huntington Beach Police Department and Orange County Animal Care want to remind residents that they **must keep** their dogs on a leash when in public areas.

HBMC 13.48.070 Animals, HBMC 7.04.010 Adoption of County Ordinances, and Orange County Codified Ordinance (OCCO) 4-1-45 Restraint of Dogs states in part: "No person owning or having charge, care, custody, or control of any dog shall cause or permit, either willfully or through failure to exercise their dogs care or control, any such dog to be upon any public property unless such dog be restrained by a substantial chain or leash not exceeding six (6) feet in length, and is under the charge of a person competent to exercise care, custody, and control over such dog."

This means your dog must be leashed anytime your dog is off your property. Your dog must be on a leash no longer than six (6) feet in length and in the care of a competent person. The absence of a leash is lawfully allowed only in designated "Dog Parks." Animals allowed to roam off leash may create a public nuisance by destroying property and causing injuries to themselves and others. All of which may result in a civil action/lawsuit against the owner. For more information or to report a violation contact:

OC Animal Care 714-935-6848

Getting Bombarded by Scam Calls? You're Not Alone

by Jim Kreisler

The Social Security Administration (SSA) phone calls are the number one scam reported to the FTC!

As soon as a caller threatens you, or demands you pay them with a gift card or by wiring money, it's a scam. Even if the caller ID tells you otherwise.

If you get a call from someone claiming to be from the Social Security Administration, hang up the phone and remember:

Your Social Security number is not about to be suspended.

The real Social Security Administration will never call to threaten your benefits.

The real SSA will never tell you to wire money, send cash, or put money on a gift card.

Many scammers use threats and high-pressure tactics to try to con you. Learning about scams makes them much easier to avoid. If you've received a call like this, tell your friends, family and neighbors about it. Tell them to hang up the phone and to report it to the Federal Trade Commission.



Tried and True Reminders for Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood Watch continues to alert the public to apply the following safety tips for your vehicle and your home! ***Lock your car, hide any valuables, and be aware while shopping during the holidays. At home, close your garage door, secure windows and doors, and be alert for suspicious activity. Rear slide doors and window screens are easy to force open. And be aware of your location: If you are very near Beach Blvd, a busy street, or the freeway, a thief can make a quick getaway. Be Alert and Stay Safe!***

For current crime information go to www.huntingtonbeachca.gov and click on government/departments/police/crime info!

HBPD Patrol Areas Map

Crime Data HB Police patrol areas are the Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, Southeast, and Downtown. Your RD (Reporting District) is the half-mile square surrounding your home. Locate your area and RD, (**please check the map on the following page 8 of this newsletter**) to familiarize where your home resides in Huntington Beach. In some cases, your AREA/ RD is identified on your mailing address label.

